

B. W. PECK, Editor.

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DEMOCRATIC MEETING.

A large crowd assembled at the Court House, on Monday evening to hear the political issues of the day discussed from a Democratic standpoint. J. H. H. Lewis, of Bethel township, was chosen president, and a number of gentlemen selected as vice presidents. The McConnellsburg Band furnished some fine music for the occasion. Hons. John S. Rilling, State Chairman; W. T. Creasy, of Columbia county, candidate for State Treasurer; John H. Fow, member of Legislature from Philadelphia, and Captain George W. Skinner, addressed the meeting in able and forcible speeches that were listened to with an attention that was higher complimentary to the gentlemen and their remarks. Our Republican friends made no arrangements for a similar meeting, as heretofore, and we presume they have adopted the policy of "saying nothing and sawing wood."

LOOKING BACKWARD.

The Turnpike and Its Taverns.

[The following interesting article from the pen of that able and well-known ex-editor and former citizen, John M. Cooper, we take from Public Opinion, Chambersburg, of several months back. It will be read with interest by a number of our readers.]

In accordance with a promise made some time ago, I propose now to give you a list of Taverns that existed along the line of the Chambersburg and Bedford Turnpike. What was called a Tavern before the French name Hotel was improperly applied to houses of this kind, was a place where "entertainment for man and beast" was furnished and a bar provided for the sale of liquors. The name may in some instances, have been given to houses that afforded entertainment but had no bar, but these were few in the "flush times" of the old Turnpike, for the "jolly wagoner" generally whistled himself and watered his horses wherever whiskey and water could be had, and under the well-known trade law of supply and demand these were liberally provided all along the road.

But before enumerating the Taverns along the old "Turnpike," as it is commonly called, let us see how the name of turnpike has come to be applied to roads of this description.

A turnpike is "a frame consisting of two bars crossing each other at right angles, and turning on a post or pin, to hinder the passage of beasts, but permitting a person to pass between the arms." This form of obstruction or defence was originally used at fortified places, and the ends of the cross-bars were pointed, so that an attempt to force a horse through would have resulted in the death or disablement of the horse and perhaps of the rider also. Nor could any considerable number of men have gone through rapidly, as they had to follow one another in "Indian file" and be careful to escape the pikes by placing themselves between the projecting arms.

When toll-roads were made and toll-houses and gates erected, a large gate was placed so that it might be swung across the middle of the road, to obstruct the passage of wagons, carriages, horses, &c., when necessary, and between this gate and the toll-house a turnpike was placed, which persons on foot might pass through at all times. From this contrivance these toll-roads came to be known as "turnpike roads."

They are always so styled in the laws incorporating them, but for brevity's sake they are commonly called "turnpikes." These facts may be known to many readers of PUBLIC OPINION, but to others they may perhaps be new.

Now let us plant ourselves at the west side of the Diamond in Chambersburg and start for Bedford, and see how many Taverns and former Taverns we can "spot out" as we go and count up at the end of our journey. On our left where the Central church stands, was the "Franklin Hotel," the eastern end of a block of three-story brick buildings which extended from the Diamond westward to the alley. The block was built by a company and finished in 1831, at which time, and for fifteen or sixteen years thereafter, the hotel was kept by Joseph Culbertson; after him by Martin Newcomer, Colonel Ellinger Joseph Alsip and William C. McNulty. (This was the first public house, and for many years the only one, in this section, I think, which adopted the French name of Hotel.) On our right, where the Valley Spirit is located, was the Golden Lamb, built by Stephen Regler, an old man well known to me when I was a boy, and kept by J. Wunderlich in 1831-2, (how much earlier I do not know,) and afterward long owned and kept by John Noel. On the southwest corner of Market street and the short alley leading back to the brewery, Benjamin Winters kept tavern several years only, in a good brick house owned by himself, sometime, I think, between 1832 and 1836.

West of the Market street bridge was Welsh's, the great wagon tavern, kept by George Ashway, afterwards by ex-Sheriff Union Elliott, later (about 1850) by Henry McCall, a son-in-law of Elliott's, and still later by Daniel Trostle, John Riley and John Miller. On the northwest corner of Market and Franklin streets, where a Mr. McCracken had a store and residence low down in "the thirties," William McGrath, who was Sheriff from 1859 till 1862, kept tavern a few years. McGuire kept at the West Point in the early "thirties," and either just before or just after being there he kept tavern where Henry Greenawalt since resided so many years, where the Warm-spring road joins the turnpike. A number of years later Jacob Eby kept tavern in the long brick house a short distance beyond the Greenawalt. That house always looked like an old tavern, but I do not recollect it as such prior to Mr. Eby's time. The next, perhaps two miles farther, was Josiah Allen's, purchased by one of the Coble's and converted into a private residence. Then, beyond Back creek, William Bratten, one of the best known landlords along the road, kept a brick house on the north side for a long period of years. Old "Billy" hung on to life and to tavern-keeping till long after his big sign-post had rotted off, and, reduced in height, had been carried across the road and lashed to the fence. A mile or so west of Bratten's was Coble's, a brick house on the south side of the road.

I recall no tavern between Coble's and St. Thomas. In this town I remember four—Seller's, Treher's, Bowermaster's and Brindle's. What other names may have been connected with them I do not know. Beyond St. Thomas I recollect none till Charles Gillan's is reached, a long brick house on the north side of the road, 10 miles west of Chambersburg. Perhaps two miles further on was Shaffer's, at the foot of Pamel's knob, a white house, built of stone and plastered outside, I think, which Christian Foltz kept 53 years ago, and John Mullan 35 to 40 years ago. Between this and Loudon was Stenger's, a stone house on the north side. Loudon was an important point at an early day and I would suppose it must have had more taverns than I am able to remember. I believe I was not in the town earlier than the year 1844. James Mullan kept tavern a long time in the old house in the middle of the town, and John Mullen kept further up toward the west end along about 1870. David Pegley was also an old tavern keeper in Loudon.

A mile west of Loudon, where the road begins to rise on the foot

of the Tuscarora mountain, was Beaver's, a well known place. John Mullan moved up to it not long after the date just above given and resided there quite a number of years. There is a house half a mile or so above Beaver's which may have been a tavern at one time, but I do not remember it as such and believe I never heard a name in connection with it. A short distance east of the crest of the Cove mountain is a long stone house which was kept as a tavern from an early period down to a date which I am unable to fix. It has for many a year been in a dilapidated condition. At the western foot of the Cove mountain, a mile out of McConnellsburg, a tavern was kept at an early day by a man named Smith. Several years ago I met an old lady, who was then 80 years of age, who said she was married (and I think also born) in that house, which her father owned and kept tavern in.

There are five houses in McConnellsburg which I have known as taverns, but one of them was torn down some years ago. The most prominent was Lindsay's, a stone house of good size, the principal stage stand. After Lindsay it was kept by Wendell, Mrs. Cooper, Emanuel Brossius, Jacob Trout and others. Cook's was a well-known drove and wagon stand. Another was kept at an early day by Scott for some years, perhaps before and after the year 1850, by Mark Dickson, and afterward by Wm. C. McNulty and others. Near the west end of town a family named Merritt's kept a tavern at which one of the lines of stages stopped in 1845 and thereabouts. After the creation of Fulton county and the erection of a Court House in McConnellsburg, a new brick tavern was built near the Court House and kept by Jacob McDonald, who, about the year 1862, exchanged it for a property at Patterson's run, four miles farther up the turnpike.

About a mile beyond McConnellsburg, on the western slope of the first ridge, is a stone house which I understand was an old-time tavern, known as Fisher's; and perhaps three-fourths of a mile farther, on the eastern slope of the middle ridge, stood a small frame or log weatherboarded house, with a running pump near the door, which I remember as an old tavern. If not kept by a Shafer when I saw it several times between the years 1850 and 1860, it subsequently became the property of a man of that name, who built a new log-framed house on the other side of the road and tore down the old building. At the western foot of the middle ridge was the Patterson's Run tavern. The first person connected with this property whom I knew personally was James Blair, who exchanged it for McDonald's as above stated. Perched just beyond the top of the third ridge, hardly a mile beyond Patterson's was the old Sipes tavern, an ancient frame or log weatherboarded house. I passed it first in daylight in 1851, when I observed the name of H. Gump on the sign. A mile or so farther we come to Licking Creek (Harrisonville,) where I believe there were two taverns, one a stone house and the other a frame. These, with adjacent lands, were from an early date the property of a Mr. Metzler, and when I became well acquainted with them, his sons Nicholas and John occupied them, the latter in the frame, which continued to be a tavern as long as I knew it. I do not know the date at which the stone house ceased to be open to the public. I remember the coach (which had then come down to a two-horse concern) from Bedford to Chambersburg stopped for dinner at the frame house in 1854.

On Green Hill, two miles west of Licking Creek, was Newman's, a store and tavern, where old residents of that neighborhood have told me a lively business was done at one time. All the buildings were weatherboarded. Half a mile farther was David Mann's store and tavern—the store a frame, the tavern a square, substantial structure, stone rough-casted, with a hall through the middle, a parlor on one side and a bar-room on the other. Half a mile farther was Alexander's, a long frame tavern, occupied 30 years or more ago, and until within a few years past, by Wm.

A. Speer, now deceased, and probably still occupied by his family. Half a mile farther, where the turnpike begins to ascend the bench of Sideling Hill was Reamer's, one of the largest houses along the road, built of stone. (The original Reamer house is in sight, about one-third of a mile away, on the old road.) Reamer's was a noted stand for stages and travelers by private conveyance, and was spoken of as one of the best kept taverns between Philadelphia and Pittsburg. Half way up Sideling Hill there once was a house which I have frequently heard old residents refer to as "the burnt tavern," but of which I have no personal recollection. It was destroyed a very long time ago.

On the eastern slope of Ray's Hill, (half a mile from its top,) where the "three mountain road" comes out to the turnpike, was Sprout's, generally called Sprout's. It passed into the hands of John Melvaine about 50 years ago, and is now, or was only a couple of years ago, owned and occupied by his daughter. It was long widely known and well patronized, and was perhaps the most noted drove stand on the road. Melvaine erected a fine barn in 1862 and enlarged the tavern house since. The buildings (some of which have long been out of use) are so numerous as to give the place the appearance of a small village.

Half a mile above Sprout's, sitting right on the top of Ray's Hill, was Buzzard's, still kept (with the old fashioned sign swinging in the wind) by Mrs. Buzzard when I saw it last, 21 years ago. Down the western slope of Ray's Hill, Samuel Stailey, formerly, (very long ago,) of Roxbury and Fannettsburg, kept tavern and had a farm. Below him was Lysinger's, where I think, without being quite sure of it, entertainment was afforded; and below that, at the western foot of the Hill, was Nycum's, an old and well-kept place, with a store and tavern and other buildings. The Nycums themselves kept the tavern in the earlier days of the turnpike; but Henry McCall, heretofore mentioned in connection with Welsh's in Chambersburg, kept it in 1851, and I think Sam Stailey and others kept it after him.

Almost within gunshot of Nycum's was Tate's, the birth-place of the well-known Tates of Bedford, a large frame house. When I first became acquainted with it, (in 1851,) it was owned and kept by a brother of the late James L. Black, of Chambersburg. With-in gunshot of Tate's was Householder's, a substantial brick house. Between this and the "Junata Crossings" (about 14 miles) there has been no tavern, unless the original Householder house may have been kept as such. It was of logs and stood some hundreds of yards west of the brick, around a sharp turn in the road, and had been torn down or rotted almost out of sight before I became acquainted with that section.

At the west end of the "Crossing" bridge was Dennison's, the main building of stone, with frame additions. This was a stage and private conveyance place, with no large yard for wagons, and was also much patronized by drovers, on account of abundant grass and water. Mr. Melvaine (later of Ray's Hill) kept here at one time, and after him George McGraw. Sam Shall, well known in Chambersburg, has been there for some years. I believe the original Dennison house was at the old "Crossing," nearly two miles farther down the river, and I am inclined to think this was the "Dennison's" mentioned by the two Philadelphia travelers who got mixed in names, distances and appearance of country in their trip up the turnpike in 1819, before it was finished the whole way to Bedford.

Along the beautiful drive from the "Crossing" to Everett, (Bloody Run,) I can recall only Weaverling's, Morgart's, and another which I think was called Fisher's, all good-sized substantial houses, the two first named still doing some business in recent years, notwithstanding the great revolution in transit wrought by the railroads. But it was not the every day and every night business of the olden time, when the turnpike was crowded with stages,

wagons, carriages, travelers on horseback, and droves of horses, cattle, sheep and hogs.

I remember five taverns at Bloody Run, and the names that come up to me in connection with them are Weaverling, Ott, Tate and Stoner. There has been a new one built there since my last visit to the town, (21 years ago,) but I do not know whether it does or does not occupy the site of one of the old ones. Major Joseph Hollar, who kept a popular house at Greencastle many years ago, had previously kept tavern at Bloody Run. His son George, who came into the Spirit office as an apprentice under me in 1850, was born there. A full list of persons who have kept tavern at Bloody Run since the first settlement was made there would be a long one.

Entertainment was afforded at the Wm. Hartley place just west of Mt. Dallas, two miles from Bloody Run, (Everett,) but although I was at the house repeatedly, I do not know much about it as a tavern, if it bore that character in the halcyon days of the road. It is a substantial stone house and has a good farm connected with it. Two miles farther is the well known Hartley tavern at the Snake Spring—a large stone house and a fine farm around it. Small air bubbles constantly arise in this spring, looking like brilliant pearls ascending from the bottom to the surface. Between the Snake Spring and the Narrows through which the Juniata passes below Bedford was the Willow Tree tavern, kept while I knew it by Joseph Mortimer. It was a pleasant place to stop at and parties used often to go down to it from the Bedford Springs. A short distance beyond the bridge over the river at the west end of the Narrows there was what I believe was an old tavern. George Lysinger owned it thirty years ago and carried on the business of a saddler and harness maker, &c., but I cannot be sure whether he entertained travelers.

In Bedford I have known seven taverns, and in connection with them I recall the names of Col. Ottinger, Major Davis, Isaac Mengel, (senior and junior,) John Hafer, J. Shomaker, and Valentine Steckman. The Ottinger and Davis houses were the old stage stands, and were fine large brick buildings. The former was converted into a store and dwelling at a date not certainly known to me, but probably from 35 to 45 years ago; and I think another old tavern, and perhaps the oldest of all, was discontinued as such a good many years ago and not long since pulled down or destroyed by fire. I think the number of public houses in Bedford now is either four or five, but I am not fully informed on this subject. A long time ago a Mr. Naugel kept one of the Bedford taverns.

In my boyhood the distance from Chambersburg to McConnellsburg was stated at 21 miles, and to Bedford 55. During the last thirty-five years I have generally heard these distances given as 22 and 56. Mentioning this change, on one occasion, to William H. McDowell, he told me that his father had made the survey for the turnpike, that he had the draft in his possession, and that the 21st mile extended to the foot of the ridge beyond the west end of McConnellsburg. This sustained the figures of distance given in my boyhood. But no matter. There was certainly an average of more than one tavern to every mile of the Chambersburg and Bedford turnpike road, supposing it to begin in the Diamond at the former place and to end in the Square at the latter, which would leave several Bedford houses a short distance beyond its western terminus. East of Sideling Hill there were four strung along half a mile apart, and at Ray's Hill and beyond there were six or seven at average distances of half a mile.

I cannot affirm that my list is entirely accurate. I write wholly from memory and have not been over any portion of the road for over 21 years. The boasted "march of improvement" was the tramp of death to this ancient highway and a great injury to the country for many miles on both sides of it. Will anything occur to revive the ancient glories of the road and of the region it traversed?

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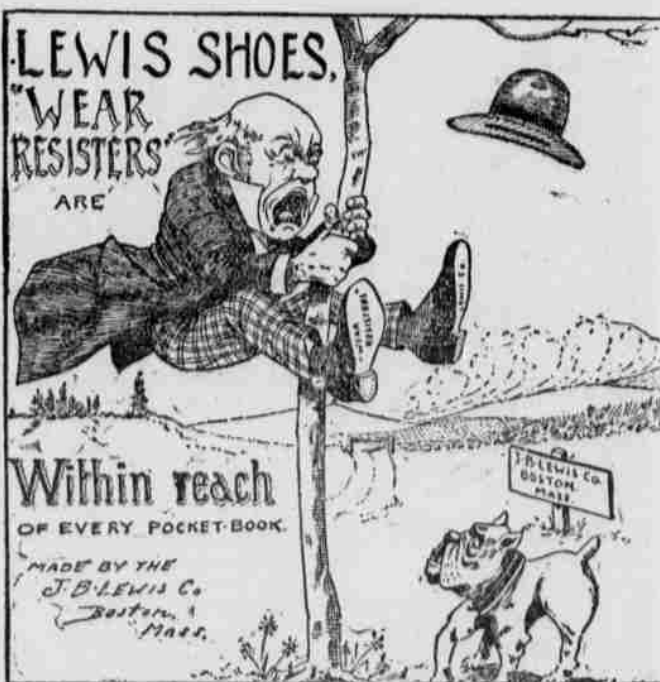
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